

McCall Subregion of the Southwest Region

The McCall Subregion was occupied by 14 documented packs during 2007 (Figure 8; Table 4). Due to lethal control conducted in 2004 and 2005 and the documentation of new packs within their former home ranges, the Hazard Lake and Partridge Creek packs were removed as documented packs in 2007. The two new packs inhabiting this area (Hard Butte verified in 2007, Carey Dome verified in 2005) may consist of remnant members of the former resident packs, but because continuous monitoring was not possible due to loss of radiocollared wolves, new names were given to the packs now occupying those territories. The Oxbow pack was removed from the list of suspected packs due to lack of evidence of continued wolf presence in that area. Seven of 8 reproductive packs qualified as breeding pairs; the Carey Dome pack was disqualified because it was believed that only 1 adult wolf was present at the end of 2007. Documented mortalities ($n = 13$) included control (agency removal and legal take; $n = 10$), other human causes (illegal take, vehicle collision, etc.; $n = 2$), and unknown ($n = 1$). Confirmed ($n = 8$) and probable ($n = 2$) wolf-caused losses of cattle were attributed to the Blue Bunch and Hard Butte packs, and wolves believed affiliated with B327 and B349. Confirmed ($n = 60$) and probable ($n = 3$) wolf-caused losses of domestic sheep were attributed to the Blue Bunch, Carey Dome, Hard Butte, Jungle Creek, and Lick Creek packs. Confirmed ($n = 4$) and probable ($n = 3$) wolf-caused losses of domestic dogs were attributed to the Blue Bunch and Hard Butte packs. Six wolves were captured by Program personnel that resulted in the placement of 5 new radiocollars (1 radiocollar was shed by a Carey Dome pack pup), and replacement of 1 existing radiocollar.

Law Enforcement Summary

Conservation Officers, in consultation with USFWS Special Agents, investigated 4 incidents involving wolf mortalities in the McCall Subregion. One wolf was recovered along Highway 95, having died of unknown cause. A second wolf carcass was recovered west of Riggins, Idaho, and was determined to have been struck by a vehicle. The third incident involved the shooting of a wolf harassing livestock, and it was determined to be a legal take under the 10(j) Rule. A fourth wolf was located on mortality mode during a monitoring flight, and the resulting investigation indicated the wolf was illegally killed.

Documented Resident Packs

Bear Pete

Male wolf B157, formerly a member of the Jungle Creek pack, began using areas outside of that pack's home range after September 2006. It was unknown whether the entire Jungle Creek pack had shifted winter use, as they did in 2005, or if B157 had separated from the pack (he was aerially observed in early March 2007 with 1 other wolf). A capture effort in mid-July resulted in the replacement of B157's radiocollar and his new mate, B331, receiving her initial radiocollar. Six pups were observed within approximately 0.5 miles (0.8 km) of the capture site. B157, B331, and 6 gray pups were observed during the August monitoring flight in a meadow west of Marshall Lake; minimum pack size was 8 individuals. This first-year pack was a breeding pair for 2007.

Blue Bunch

Founded by alpha female B218 and an unknown male, this pack produced its third litter of pups in 2007. The den site was located near their namesake ridge, where 3 gray pups were observed in late June. Field and aerial observations indicated the minimum estimated pack size was 7

individuals. This pack was implicated in livestock depredations where 3 domestic sheep were confirmed killed and 1 calf was listed as a probable wolf-kill. Three domestic dogs were also confirmed killed by this pack, and another was classified as a probable wolf kill. The Blue Bunch pack was a breeding pair for 2007.

Carey Dome

During control actions in 2006, females B309 and B315 (see Other Documented Wolf Groups), were captured and radiocollared; they were believed to be members of the Carey Dome pack, although the actual number of packs and wolf membership was not certain in this area due to disruption of wolf social structure from continued wolf-livestock conflicts and attendant lethal wolf removals. Four pups were observed during mid-July, though additional pups were likely present based upon howling. Three wolves from this pack were known to have died in 2007. Two adult males were lethally controlled (WS attributed 7 confirmed and 1 probable wolf-killed domestic sheep to this pack) and another wolf was killed by a vehicle on the fringe of the pack's home range. Based upon aerial sightings, ground efforts, and lethal control activities, it was believed that by the end of 2007, this pack was minimally comprised of alpha female B309 and her 4+ pups. The Carey Dome pack was not a breeding pair in 2007 because only 1 adult wolf was present in this pack at the end of the year.

Chamberlain Basin

Five gray pups were observed and a sixth was heard howling in mid-July. In addition, 5 adults were observed. The carcass and radiocollar of the pack's original alpha female, B16, was discovered by a hiker near the mouth of Sabe Creek on the north side of the Salmon River. Based upon level of decomposition, it was likely that B16 died during 2006. Minimum estimated pack size was 11 wolves. The Chamberlain Basin pack was a 2007 breeding pair.

Golden Creek

Researchers from the University of Idaho's Taylor Ranch field station observed 4 gray pups near the suspected den area. Possible alpha male B319 was captured in early April, joining suspected alpha female B229 as radiocollared individuals. Pack size was estimated at a minimum of 7 individuals. The Golden Creek pack was a breeding pair for 2007.

Hard Butte

This pack occupied at least part of the former Hazard Lake pack's territory (*see* Hazard Lake). Following up on reports from hunters during bow-hunting season, biologists were able to document the presence of at least 3 pups and multiple adults based upon howling. A capture effort was initiated, but pack mobility and the presence of sheep herding/guarding dogs limited the scope of the operation, and no wolves were caught. The origin of this pack was unknown; they may be remnants of the Hazard Lake pack, which was heavily controlled in 2004 (including removal of all radiocollared individuals), or they may have derived from wolves that recolonized this area following the elimination of the previous pack. This pack was involved in 8 confirmed and 1 probable wolf-killed sheep plus 1 confirmed calf depredation. One pet dog was killed and 2 others were categorized as probable wolf-kills by this pack. An adult male wolf, probably a member of this pack, was lethally controlled in late November northeast of New Meadows, Idaho. Minimum estimated pack size was 5 wolves. The Hard Butte pack was considered a breeding pair in 2007.

Hazard Lake

This pack has been removed from the list of documented packs and the Hard Butte pack occupied this territory.

Jungle Creek

All previously documented rendezvous sites for this pack were investigated in June, but none of them were in use and very little wolf sign was seen in those areas. A University of Montana research crew heard multiple wolves howling near the Twentymile Creek drainage prior to the rendezvous site searches, but with the departure of B157 (*see* Bear Pete), monitoring of this uncollared group was difficult. Reports of black and gray wolves were received during summer from Victor and Pearl Creeks, drainages known to have been used by the pack in the past, but all previously known wolves in this pack were gray individuals. In mid-August, wolves were confirmed to have killed 41 sheep near Josephine Lake north of McCall, Idaho; another 15 sheep were injured. Wildlife Services' personnel opportunistically killed 4 wolves during depredation investigation/control activities over 2 days: 2 adult, black females; 1 adult, black male; and 1 adult, gray male. Multiple wolves were heard howling by the WS field agent the following day. Based upon the coincidence of pelage colors reported from sightings and the wolves lethally removed, it was believed that wolves reported from Victor/Pearl Creeks were responsible for the depredations. A second incidence of sheep depredation occurred in September, at which time WS attempted to radiocollar the first individual captured, but no wolves were caught. Pack size was estimated at a minimum of 4 individuals at the end of 2007. This pack was not reported as a breeding pair for 2007 as there was no information pertaining to their reproductive status.

Lick Creek

The Lick Creek pack's den area was located in late May, but due to heavy vegetative cover only 2 gray pups were observed at that time. A second field effort in early July was able to document 6 gray pups and the presence of 2 adult-sized wolves, including suspected alpha female B288. Minimum pack size was estimated at 8 wolves. This pack was implicated in the loss of 1 confirmed and 1 probable sheep killed by wolves. The Lick Creek pack was a breeding pair for 2007.

Monumental Creek

Females B250 and B287 remained with the pack, though B287 was located only sporadically throughout the year. The minimum pack estimate was 15 gray wolves (8 pups, 7 adults) based upon an observation at the den/rendezvous site. This pack qualified as a 2007 breeding pair.

Orphan

With no radiocollared wolves to assist biologists, this pack was difficult to monitor. Sightings during spring suggested that wolves were present, but the number of wolves was undetermined. Residents of a fire camp in Scott Valley, where the pack's rendezvous site was found in 2005, reported hearing and observing what they believed to be multiple wolves howling, including pups. Several survey efforts failed to reveal wolf activity or evidence of reproduction. Male wolf B327 (*see* Other Documented Wolf Groups) was captured in the former Gold Fork pack's territory, but was often located in the Orphan pack's home range. Pack and reproductive status of the Orphan pack was unknown at the end of 2007, so it was not considered a breeding pair.

Partridge Creek

This pack has been removed from the list of documented because the Carey Dome and Bear Pete packs occupied this territory.

Sleepy Hollow

Male B148, captured as a member of the Big Hole pack, and male B181, captured as a member of the Partridge Creek pack, have adjacent radio frequencies. Both of these wolves dispersed from their respective packs and radio contact was lost for a time on B148 (from late October 2003 until January 2005). A signal from one of these wolves was detected in what became the Sleepy Hollow pack's home range, but due to frequency drift, Program personnel were unable to identify which of these wolves was being monitored. Spring telemetry locations were inconclusive as to the denning status of this pack, and it was hoped that the pack would move to a more readily accessible location where reproductive status could be assessed. Wildfires prevented any survey efforts, but an aerial observation in October spotted only 3 wolves, though this was likely an incomplete count compared with 2006 data. During a November monitoring flight, the radiocollared individual was detected on mortality mode. An attempt to recover the carcass/radiocollar was initiated, but no further radio signal was heard, suggesting the radiocollar's battery expired before it could be recovered; this was recorded as a suspected mortality. The Sleepy Hollow pack was not considered a breeding pair in 2007 and a minimum of 2 wolves remained.

Stolle Meadows

Aerial telemetry locations suggested that suspected alpha female B249 had denned in spring 2007. Investigation of this area indicated prolonged wolf use, but no evidence of pups or a den was found. Ground and aerial observations from 2006 suggested that perhaps only the 2 radiocollared wolves, B249 and male B259 were present. Wildfires prevented access for much of the field season, but prior to area restrictions, a University of Montana research crew located a minimum of 3 sets of wolf tracks and a recreationist reported observing 5-8 wolves along the South Fork Salmon River. An aerial observation in October spotted 3 black and 1 gray wolves, while B259 (white) was likely not seen. Based upon an aerial observation and reports, minimum estimated pack size was 4 individuals. The Stolle Meadows pack was not counted as a breeding pair for the second consecutive year.

Thunder Mountain

Program efforts to document continued wolf occupancy of this pack's territory were successful when wolf tracks and scats were located in the Indian Creek drainage; however, subsequent wildfires in the area thwarted plans for a capture operation and no further field efforts were undertaken. A hunting outfitter with a camp at Riordan Lake reported multiple sightings of 7 wolves there in 2006, but this information could not be verified. No evidence of reproduction was obtained, so the Thunder Mountain pack was not recorded as a breeding pair for 2007. Additional monitoring efforts will be made to determine this pack's status in 2008.

Wolf Fang

Suspected alpha female B282, radiocollared in June 2006, was not located from October 2006 through March 2007; this pack's whereabouts were unknown during this time. In April, a ground crew detected B282's radio signal in the Big Creek drainage near where this pack's pups were observed in 2006. Five gray wolves were observed, but no evidence of reproduction was found and the wolves moved extensively at a time when they should have been localized if pups were present. Three gray wolves were observed during an October monitoring flight, but based upon field efforts the minimum pack size estimate was 5 wolves. This pack was not considered a breeding pair for 2007.

Suspected Resident Packs

Oxbow

Due to a lack of information for the past 2 years, the Oxbow pack was no longer considered a suspected pack by the end of 2007.

Other Documented Wolf Groups

B219

During a September monitoring flight, B219's radio signal was located on mortality mode near Rainbow Lake in the Boise National Forest. She was initially captured and radiocollared as a member of the Magruder pack in 2004, and had not been located since May 2005. Skeletal remains and her radiocollar were retrieved at a site approximately 55 miles (88 km) from the Magruder pack's home range and based upon the condition of the remains, it was estimated that B219 likely died prior to 2007; an investigation was opened by USFWS Law Enforcement division.

B315

Female B315 was captured and radiocollared during a control action in October 2006 south of Hartley Meadows (north of McCall, Idaho). She remained in the vicinity of her capture until December 2006, at which time she was aeri ally located along the Salmon River. In January 2007, she was aeri ally located a few miles south of Riggins, Idaho, along the Little Salmon River. B315's signal was not detected again until September 2007, when she was located in the headwaters of Rapid River on the west side of the Little Salmon River drainage. Pack affiliation, if any, and reproductive status were unknown.

B327

Male wolf B327 was captured by WS during a control action and fitted with a GPS radiocollar. B327 was trapped in the former Gold Fork pack's home range, but was also located within the Orphan pack's territory, including their 2005 rendezvous site. Ground-tracking efforts to determine his affiliation with other wolves were unsuccessful; B327 appeared to be alone each time he was located. Six confirmed calf losses and 1 probable calf loss occurred during the time span preceding B327's capture, during the control action, and also following his capture.

B349

Male wolf B349 was captured and radiocollared in mid-August by WS. Two other wolves were lethally removed during this control action. Following these removals, tracks of at least 2 wolves were found near a recent aerial location of B349. During the October monitoring flight B349's signal was detected on mortality mode; USFWS Law Enforcement agents investigated the following day, collected the carcass, and opened an active case. The loss of B349 will make determination of wolf status in this area more difficult to ascertain.

2007 McCall SubRegion Wolf Activity

Telemetry, Documented and Suspected Locations

2006-07 Telemetry and Research-based Locations *

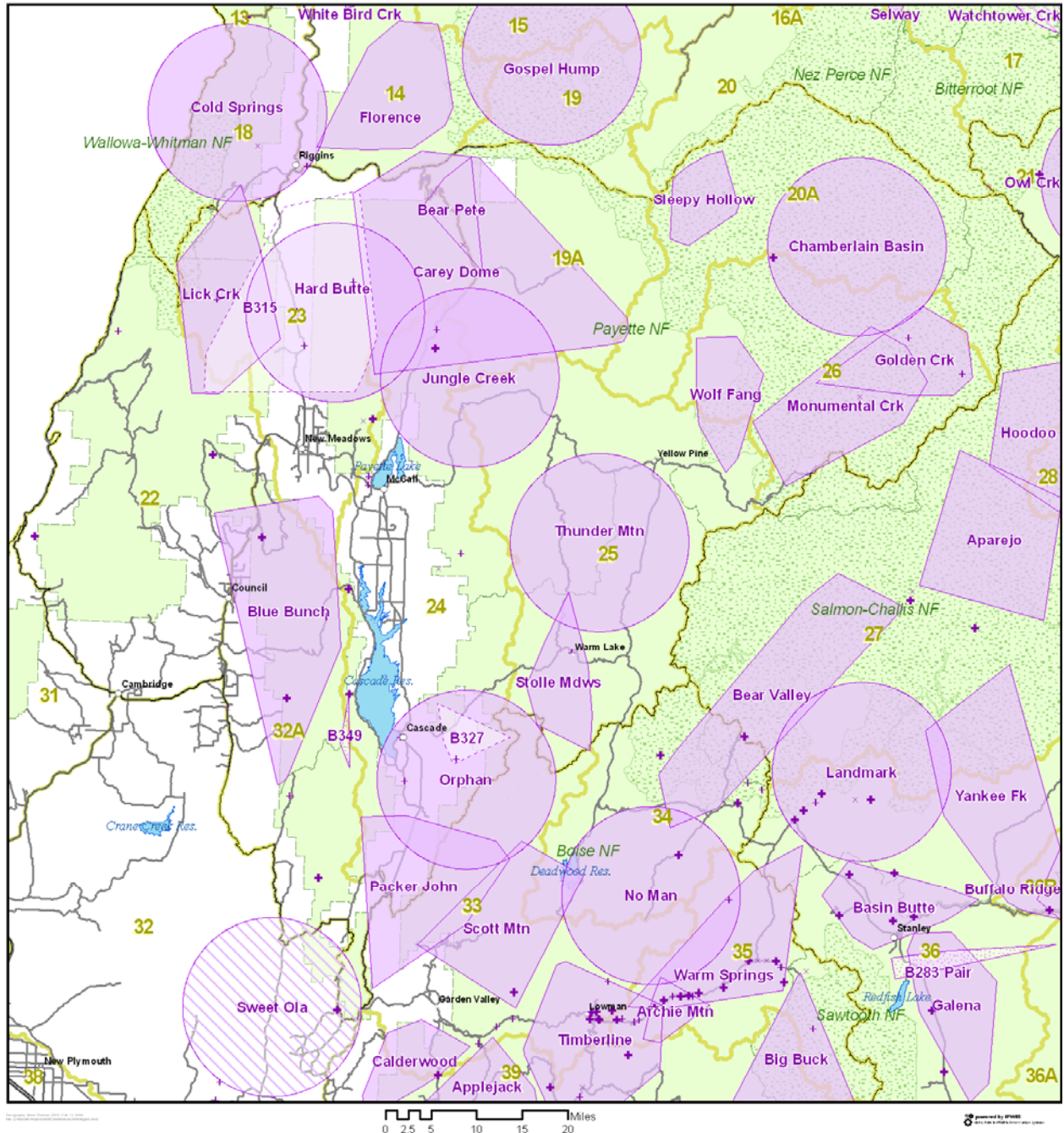
2007 Estimated Locations (Not Telemetry-based)**

2007 Public Observations ***

- Documented Pack
- Documented Group (Less than 4 animals)
- Documented Lone Wolf

- Documented Pack
- Documented Group (Pair or Group less than 4 animals)
- Suspected Pack
- Terminated Group

- Multiple Wolves Observed
- Single Wolf Sighted
- Not Specified



* Telemetry data and research locations collected and analyzed by Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the Nez Perce Tribe, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Wildlife Services and the National Park Service. Pack locations are minimum convex polygons of telemetry and research observations for radiocollared wolves from 1/1/2006 - 12/31/2007 with outliers removed. Packs which did not exist in 2007 are excluded. This map is provided for management purposes and should not be used for data analysis. Do not release these data to third parties without first contacting the Idaho Department of Fish and Game or the Nez Perce Tribe.

** Estimated Pack Activity determined by biologists from research locations, public observations and incidental observations from 1/1/2006 - 12/31/2007.

*** Public Observations from 1/1/2007 - 12/31/2007 collected on the Idaho Fish and Game website and reviewed by staff biologists.

Figure 8. Wolf pack activity and observations in the McCall Subregion, 2007.

Table 4. Minimum number of wolves detected, reproductive status, mortality, dispersal, monitoring status, and livestock depredation for documented and suspected wolf packs and other wolf groups within Idaho Department of Fish and Game McCall Subregion, 2007.

Wolf group ^a	Min. no. wolves detected ^b	Reproductive status			Documented mortalities				Known dispersal	Monitoring status			Confirmed & (probable) wolf-caused livestock losses		
		Min. no. pups prod. (died) ^c	Reported as		Natural	Control ^e	Other human ^f	Unknwn ^g		Active radio collars	No. wolf captures ^h	No. wolves missing ⁱ	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs
			reprod. pack	breeding pair ^d											
DOCUMENTED PACK															
Bear Pete	8	6	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Blue Bunch	7	3	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	(1)	3	3(1)
Carey Dome	5	4	YES	NO	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	7(1)	0
Chamberlain Basin	11	6	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Golden Creek	7	4	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Hard Butte	5	3	YES	YES	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8(1)	1(2)
Hazard Lake ^j															
Jungle Creek	4	?	NO	NO	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	0
Lick Creek	8	6	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1(1)	0
Monumental Creek	15	8	YES	YES	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Orphan	?	?	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Partridge Creek ^j															
Sleepy Hollow	2	?	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stolle Meadows	4	?	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Thunder Mountain	?	?	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wolf Fang	5	0	NO	NO	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL	81	40			0	7	1	0	0	12	4	0	1(1)	60(3)	4(3)
SUSPECTED PACK															
Oxbow ^j															
SUBTOTAL	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER DOCUMENTED GROUP															
B219	0				0	0	0	0 ^k	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B315	1				0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
B327	1				0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	6(1)	0	0
B349	1				0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	1 ^l	0	0
SUBTOTAL	3	0			0	2	1	0	0	2	2	0	7(1)	0	0
UNKNOWN															
	?				0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL	0	0			0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
REGIONAL TOTAL	84	40			0	10	2	1	0	14	6	0	8(2)	60(3)	4(3)

^a Documented pack = territorial groups of wolves usually consisting of an adult male and female and their offspring from one or more generations, and has the potential to reproduce (2 adults of opposite sex). Suspected pack = geographic areas where wolf pack presence was suspected but not verified, or where wolf presence was verified but did not meet documented pack status. Other documented group = verified groups not meeting either documented or suspected pack

Table 4. Continued.

status (e.g., lone wolves, potential mated pairs, etc.). Unknown = geographic areas where wolf presence was previously unverified and/or no data on group status was known.

^b Summing this column does not equate to number of wolves estimated to be present in the population.

^c Number in parentheses indicates known pup mortality; pup mortalities tallied in the appropriate column in DOCUMENTED MORTALITIES.

^d Breeding pairs are the measure of Federal and State wolf recovery and management goals. A breeding pair is defined as “an adult male and a female wolf that have produced at least 2 pups that survive until December 31 of the year of their birth...”.

^e Includes agency lethal control and legal take.

^f Includes all other human-related deaths.

^g Does not include pups that disappeared before winter.

^h Includes wolves captured for monitoring purposes during 2007. Most, but not all, were radiocollared.

ⁱ Radiocollared wolves that became missing in 2007.

^j Group no longer considered extant due to agency lethal removal, lack of verified evidence for the preceding 2 years, or other cause.

^k B219's remains were located in 2007, but condition of the remains suggested wolf likely died in 2006.

^l Depredation occurred in Nampa Subregion.